VISIT…

AN ICY HEART

A short adventure for four high-level player characters

CREDITS

Design:	Eric Haddock
Editing and Typesetting:	Sue Weinlein Cook
Cartography:	Todd Gamble
Web Production:	Julia Martin
Web Development:	Mark A. Jindra
Graphic Design:	Sean Glenn, Cynthia Fliege

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and on the new edition of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Rich Baker, and Peter Adkison.

d20 system

D&D, DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, DRAGON, FORGOTTEN REALMS, and DUNGEON MASTER are registered trademarks owned by Wizards of the Coast, Inc. The d20 logo is a trademark owned by Wizards of the Coast, Inc. All Wizards characters, character names, and the distinctive likenesses thereof are trademarks owned by Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

This material is protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America. Any reproduction or unauthorized use of the material or artwork contained herein is prohibited without the express written permission of Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

This product is a work of fiction. Any similarity to actual people, organizations, places, or events is purely coincidental.

This Wizards of the Coast game product contains no Open Game Content. No portion of this work may be reproduced in any form without written permission. To learn more about the Open Gaming License and the d20 System License, please visit www.wizards.com/d20.

©2002 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. All rights reserved. Made in the U.S.A.

INTRODUCTION

The peaks of a nearby mountain range have been home to Krikk, an old white dragon, for as long as anyone can remember. Aside from claiming ownership of a few villages and settlements near her range, she hasn't posed much of a threat or even taken much notice of political events around her.

Last week, a king's prophet had a vision of golems made of ice that wouldn't melt smashing through the royal castle walls, and of crops frozen under sheets of ice formed by the white dragon's breath. Alarmed, the king has sent word that he desires someone brave enough to go to the dragon and find out whether she's about to attack. If she is, the party must stop her before it's too late. But, another prophet warns that the white dragon has an entirely different plot afoot, and that an icy grave awaits anyone who goes up the mountain.

The player characters (PCs) have to figure out what's going on—then decide on their own what they should do about it, while the fate of a king and his castle hangs in the balance.

PREPARATION

You, the Dungeon Master (DM), need a copy of the *Player's Handbook*, the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*, and the *MONSTER MANUAL*® to use this adventure. Full monster and nonplayer character (NPC) statistics are provided with each encounter.

This adventure can take place in any mountain range available to the player characters. Ideally, the range should form the natural border between two or more kingdoms. This range requires no specific characteristics, so any range in your campaign world should do. Whether the peaks are high enough to have year-round snow and ice isn't important—in fact, it might be better if they didn't, as the icy mountaintops around Krikk's lair would make her influence seem that much more powerful.

Regardless of the real name of the mountain range, those living right next to the mountains refer to it as "Krikk's range." Those living in towns or cities farther away than a day's travel use the range's proper name: the Cloudtouch Mountains, for the purpose of this adventure. You are free to replace this name with a name (and location) appropriate for your campaign world.

Krikk's lair is a fairly simple arrangement of chambers cut from the mountain. You can use floor plans from the October Map-a-Week feature on the D&D

website to serve as her lair. It is available for download at <http://www.wizards.com/dnd/images/mapofweek/oct_dwelling2_low.jpg>. The relevant portion of the map is reprinted here for your convenience.

BACKGROUND

Krikk, a female old white dragon and 10th-level druid, has claimed ownership of various small villages and settlements around her mountain range for the better part of 200 years. Her rule is largely nonviolent. She extorts money from "her" villages and, in exchange, does not freeze crops, demand sacrifices, or kill anyone that doesn't deserve it—decidedly odd behavior for a dragon, especially a white one. She also seems to take only enough money to keep the locals from complete hardship. Perhaps most surprising of all, twice she has defended her villages from barbarian attacks.

Naturally, kings and local warlords claiming Krikk's villages have opposed her over the years by sending heroes and mercenaries up into the mountains to confront her. The heroes never return, and the less scrupulous mercenaries often come back weighed down with money or gold after striking some kind of deal. (They say they cannot talk about their agreement, but invariably they later perform some errand or duty on the dragon's behalf.) Regardless, Krikk has not troubled any ruler or warlord much.

This is just as well, for it would cost more resources to challenge the dragon directly with a force powerful enough to defeat her than any group of villages is worth to a petty ruler. Unless, of course, the force sent to oppose her wasn't an army but a party of adventurers. They are expensive, but not as costly as an army. And, sometimes, they can accomplish just as much.

Recently, the royal prophet from a kingdom just outside Krikk's territory has experienced a vision indicating the dragon is about to dramatically expand her "protectorate." This seer, a man named Galandan, saw armies of soldiers made of ice that wouldn't melt smashing through the walls of the king's castle. In this vision, crops froze under sheets of ice laid by Krikk's frigid breath. However, a rival prophet, Derina, has foreseen something greater afoot than what mere visions show. Anyone ascending the mountain to confront the dragon will never leave the peaks alive, she feels certain.

The two visions have alarmed King Heldar (or draw an appropriate personage from your campaign), and he has asked for a party of adventurers brave enough to go to Krikk and find out what her plans really are.

CHARACTER HOOKS

Use any of these avenues to get the player characters into the adventure:

- King Heldar, who has been shaken by the visions of these two prophets, may be known to the group.
- The PCs may know one of the villages under Krikk's control, or have acquaintances there. Either way, they could have a personal interest in seeing what the dragon is up to.
- If the dragon truly seeks to mount an offensive, someone must thwart her effort in order to maintain stability in the area. Some of the PCs may desire to uphold the region's current ruling authority.
- Krikk is known as a druid. She is also known for controlling the weather around her peaks to keep it much colder than natural—and has been doing so for years. This may not sit well with druids who want to preserve the temperate area's natural state.
- Krikk has a lieutenant, an awakened dire bear named Maximus. Maximus serves as Krikk's enforcer and frequently visits the villages around the Cloudtouch Mountains. He might have harshly dealt with someone the PCs know, prompting their desire to seek justice.
- A high-enough Gather Information or Bardic Knowledge check (see the table below) may prompt magic-using PCs to visit the dragon to investigate—and perhaps plunder—her magical research.
- The PCs may simply respond to the public offer for someone brave enough to face the dragon, in exchange for a reward of 10,000 gp or a royal favor.

GATHER INFORMATION OR BARDIC KNOWLEDGE CHECKS

PCs who ask around about Krikk, the Cloudtouch Mountains, or the situation in general while in a village near the range may learn the following:

DC	Information Gained
10	A dragon named Krikk lives in the mountains near here.
15	Maximus, Krikk's lieutenant, has been seen in the area more often than usual, but he hasn't been collecting money. No one knows for sure what he's up to.
20	Maximus might be raising an army for the assault everyone knows Krikk is going to make. That's why he has been wandering around lately.

25 Maximus is not raising an army, he's finding out the strength of neighboring villages, lookouts, and forts.

30 Krikk has developed a spell that creates ice creatures that look like her: tiny dragons that obey her every command.

35 Krikk has been researching the ritual of golem creation and has made significant progress in the past few months.

40 Krikk can't complete her golem ritual without some essential component, which she doesn't yet have. One purpose of Maximus's wanderings is to find that component. Word is that Maximus and Krikk will make a deal for it, should anyone already have the ingredient. One has to talk to Maximus, or Krikk directly, for more information.

THE DRAGON'S LAIR

Krikk uses a rather unassuming cave as her lair. She chose it for its abundance of natural ice and because it has enough room for her golem workshop. If Maximus or one of her ice dragons alerts her to someone approaching on her mountain, she casts *commune with nature* to ascertain the exact location of the interlopers. She doesn't have a particular way to detect flying creatures, other than happening to spot them in the air—unlikely, as she spends most of her time in her cave.

At any given time, one of Krikk's ice dragons (new spell, see below) is moving about her cave performing chores. Maximus may be there as well and, as he leads a group of soldiers, some of them are likely to be with him. Whether to have Maximus and his troops join the dragon in her lair depends on the encounter level you wish to present to the players (EL 24 for Krikk alone or with Maximus, varying upward based on how many fighters accompany the lieutenant, and on their level).

Maximus spends much of his time off the mountain on missions for Krikk. If you want the PCs to encounter the two separately, the party may meet the awakened dire bear (and his troops) during one of his visits to a village or perhaps on the way to the mountain.

Area 1: Workshop

The workshop is where Krikk researches golem-creation rituals. It's the room she is most likely to guard, giving it priority over other rooms. (Areas 2 to 10, though not detailed here, can serve as sleeping quarters for Krikk and Maximus, barracks for the dire bear's soldiers, plus an entry, dining hall, pantry, and rude kitchen.)

Inside is a large table carved from solid stone. Its future purpose is for golem construction, but for now Krikk uses it to hold books and scrolls. If she becomes aware that someone is searching the room, she uses her freezing fog ability to prevent anyone from reading any of them—or worse, stealing anything.

Should anyone enter the room, then leave under any circumstance (even with the dragon's permission), she demands to search them, for fear that they might be trying to steal from her. On this point she does not back down; she would rather resort to combat and kill someone than risk losing something from this room.

If Maximus is present, he (and any of his men that are with him) stand in front of the doorway to prevent anyone from entering.

This workshop is secured with a large stone slab that Krikk fashioned herself. It has no hinges or locks; the dragon hopes its sheer size and bulk will keep most interlopers from gaining access to the room. The slab (hardness 20, 400 hp) can be moved with a Strength check (DC 50). Krikk is well aware that certain spells might allow intruders to get past it, so she remains ever on the lookout for such magic used near the slab (*teleport, transmute rock to mud*, etc.). She'll kill anyone who tries to get past the slab without her permission.

If the PCs are able to enter the room, they find materials for constructing golems worth 200,000 gp (if they manage to leave with it). Much of the material is research papers and the like, representing the years of study Krikk has invested in creating a new type of golem. It's knowledge that will fetch a high price from the right buyers.

Speaking to Krikk

If the PCs elect to parley with Krikk instead of launching a surprise attack on her, she takes the time to address them. She has no knowledge about the prophets or their visions. (Though of course she knows that kings and warlords employ people they consider "prophets," she doesn't bother to keep track of who this decade's king is, or where the borders are drawn on whose map, and so on.) She steers the conversation away from plans to attack King Heldar's castle. Throughout the interview, she emphasizes that her only interest lies in preserving the territory she already has; she will not surrender any of it, nor will she expand it. (To detect this lie, the PCs may make a Sense Motive skill check, opposed by the dragon's Charisma check.)

Krikk is especially secretive about her work with golems. Should the player characters discover this secret (either in her lair or with especially high Gather Information or Bardic Knowledge checks [see table above]) and reveal that they know it, she won't hesitate to kill them to protect it.

The dragon, though good at seeing through other peoples' lies, is not very good at lying herself. Instead, she tries to use her Diplomacy skill to steer the conversation away from topics she doesn't want to talk about.

Beyond the Parley

If Krikk survives or convinces the PCs that she poses no threat, she completes her research on ice golems in one month (Maximus having found the missing component) and begins making them. Once she has four golems, she uses them to launch a coordinated attack with herself and her lieutenant against King Heldar's castle, just as the vision indicated.

If Krikk was killed but Maximus survived, he attempts to set himself up in the dragon's place as a minor warlord over the area. He immediately begins to raise an army to march against King Heldar for sponsoring the PCs that killed his mistress. If he knows where the PCs are, he'll of course try to kill them first.

KRIKK (EL 24)

Krikk, female advanced old white dragon/Dru 10: CR 24; Huge dragon; HD 26d12+130 plus 10d8+50, hp 394; Init +4; Spd 60, fly 200 (poor), swim 60, burrow 30; AC 35 (touch 12, flat-footed 35); Atk +34 melee (2d8+9, bite) and +28 melee (2d6+4, 2 claws) and +28 melee (1d8+4, 2 wings) and +28 melee (2d6+13, tail slap), or +33 melee (2d8+13, crush); SA Breath weapon (50-ft. cone of cold), frightful presence, spell-like abilities; SQ Animal companion (none), blindsight 240 ft., cold subtype, damage reduction 10/+1, dragon traits, *freezing fog*, icewalking, keen vision, nature sense, *resist nature's lure*, spell resistance 21, trackless step, venom immunity, *wild shape* (Small, Medium-size, or Large animal 5/day), woodland stride; Face/Reach 10 ft. x 20 ft./10 ft.; AL CN; SV Fort +20, Ref +15, Will +20, Str 29, Dex 10, Con 21, Int 12, Wis 20, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Alchemy +6, Concentration +29, Diplomacy +35, Hide –8, Intimidate +18, Knowledge (arcana) +30, Knowledge (local) +30, Knowledge (nature) +40, Sense Motive +19, Spellcraft +25, Spot +7, Wilderness Lore +12; Alertness, Combat Casting, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Snatch, Weapon Focus (bite), Wingover.

Breath Weapon (Su): A white dragon has a 50-foot cone of cold breath weapon that inflicts 8d6 points of damage, with a Reflex save (DC 28) for half damage. Krikk is immune to her own breath weapon.

Frightful Presence (Ex): Krikk can unsettle foes with her mere presence. This ability takes effect automatically whenever she attacks, charges, or flies overhead. It affects only opponents within a 240-foot radius who have 23 or fewer HD. The affected creature must make a successful Will save (DC 24) or become shaken (if 5 or more HD) or panicked (if 4 or fewer HD) for 4d6 rounds. Success indicates that the target is immune to Krikk's frightful presence for one day.

Spell-like Abilities (*Sp*): 3/day—*gust of wind, fog cloud*. These abilities are as the spells cast by a 8th-level sorcerer (base save DC = 11 + spell level).

Animal Companion (Su): Although Krikk is capable of having an animal companion, she hasn't elected to gain one.

Blindsight (Ex): Krikk maneuvers and fights as well by nonvisual means as she does by visual ones. Invisibility and darkness are irrelevant, though she still can't discern ethereal beings. Krikk usually does not need to make Spot or Listen checks to notice creatures within range of her blindsight ability.

Cold Subtype (Ex): Immune to cold damage; takes double damage from fire unless a saving throw for half damage is allowed, in which case she takes half damage on a success and double damage on a failure.

Dragon Traits: Immune to sleep and paralysis effects.

Freezing Fog (*Sp*): Krikk can use this ability three times per day. It is similar to a *solid fog* spell but also causes a rime of slippery ice to form on any surface the fog touches, creating the effect of a *grease* spell (DC 13). The dragon is immune to the grease effect because of her icewalking ability.

Icewalking (Ex): This ability works just like the *spider climb* spell, but the surfaces Krikk climbs must be icy. It remains always in effect.

Keen Senses (Ex): Krikk sees four times as well as a human in low-light conditions and twice as well in normal light. She also has darkvision with a range of 800 feet.

Nature Sense (Ex): Krikk can identify plants and animals (their species and special traits) with perfect accuracy. She can tell whether water is safe to drink or dangerous (polluted, poisoned, or otherwise unfit for consumption).

Resist Nature's Lure (*Sp*): Krikk has a +4 bonus to saving throws against the spell-like abilities of feys.

Trackless Step (Su): Krikk leaves no trail in natural surroundings and cannot be tracked. This is a particularly useful ability for her, because it allows her to roam her mountain range without anyone knowing she has passed.

Venom Immunity (Ex): Krikk is immune to all organic poisons, including monster poisons but not mineral poisons or poison gas.

Wild Shape (*Sp*): Krikk can, five times per day, change her shape as with the spell *polymorph self*, but only into a Small or Medium-size animal (but not a dire animal or unnatural beast) and back again. Unlike the standard use of the spell, Krikk may adopt only one animal form at a time. If she wishes to assume a new form, she has to use the *wild shape* ability again. Krikk also regains hit points as if she had rested for a day whenever she uses this ability. She never becomes disoriented from using this ability.

Woodland Stride (Ex): Krikk may move through natural thorns, briars, overgrown areas, and similar terrain at her normal speed and without suffering damage or other impairment. However, thorns, briars, and overgrown areas that are enchanted or magically manipulated to impede motion still affect her.

Druid Spells Prepared: (6/6/5/4/4/4) 0—*create water, detect magic, guidance, know direction, mending, read magic*; 1st—*animal friendship, endure elements, faerie fire, invisibility to animals, magic fang, pass without trace*; 2nd—*chill metal, heat metal, lesser restoration, resist elements, soften earth and stone*; 3rd—*call lightning, cure moderate wounds, meld into stone, protection from element*; 4th—*cure serious wounds, dispel magic, flame strike, freedom of movement*; 5th—*commune with nature, cure critical wounds, ice dragon**

* New spell; see next page.

Possessions (in use): Boots of speed, cloak of arachnida, druid's vestment, gem of seeing, ring of regeneration, periapt of wisdom +4, ring of shooting stars, and scroll of *repel metal or stone*, and scroll of *summon nature's ally V*.

Tactics

In combat, Krikk moves to protect her golem workshop first and casts *protection from elements: fire* on herself. After that, she concentrates her attacks on the most dangerous spellcasters, while Maximus and his soldiers work through everyone else. If the battle goes poorly, she burrows 10 feet into the ice to get to the rock of the mountain and casts *meld into stone* to retreat.

Krikk's Background

When the PCs meet her, Krikk is focused on one goal: complete subjugation of the Cloudtouch Mountains. Not a strictly evil dragon (unlike most whites), she has allowed the villages under her control some degree of freedom—of course, the wealth brought in by local trade makes her better able to obtain the resources she needs for her magical experiments. Her next step toward her goal is the creation of ice golems, creatures she will use as foot soldiers and enforcers to extend her authority. To this end, Krikk is conducting research on how to use her druidic powers to manufacture golems. She has already researched and developed a spell, *ice dragon*, for creating servants, but she needs something more powerful and permanent.

MAXIMUS

Krikk discovered a dire bear in the Cloudtouch Mountains and decided to awaken him when she had gained enough experience as a druid to do so. Maximus has turned out to be a most loyal and trustworthy companion, becoming Krikk's right-hand paw, as it were.

Maximus, male awakened dire bear/Bbn 6/Ftr 6: CR 19; Large magical beast; HD 14d8 + 70 plus 6d10 + 30, hp 265; Init +1; Spd 50 ft.; AC 23 (touch 10, flat-footed 23); Atk +30 melee (2d4+11, 2 claws) and +24 melee (2d8+5, bite); SA Improved grab; SQ Fast movement, low-light vision, rage 2/day, scent, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC, can't be flanked); Face/Reach 10 ft. x 20 ft./10 ft.; AL CN; SV Fort + 17, Ref +15, Will +15; Str 33, Dex 13, Con 20, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Climb +14, Handle Animal +7, Intimidate +15, Jump +14, Knowledge (local) +13, Listen +7, Ride (dragon) +3, Spot +7, Swim +20; Dodge, Expertise, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Disarm, Improved Trip, Mobility, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (claw).

Improved Grab (Ex): If Maximus hits with a claw attack, he deals normal damage and can attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. Improved grab works only against opponents of Medium-size or smaller. Maximus has the option to conduct the grapple normally, or simply use his claw to hold the opponent. Each successful grapple check he makes during successive rounds automatically deals the damage listed for his claw attack.

Low-Light Vision: Maximus can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar low-light conditions.

Rage: The following changes remain in effect as long as Maximus rages: AC 21 (touch 8, flat-footed 21); hp 317; Atk +32 melee (2d4+13, 2 claws) and +26 melee (2d8+6, bite); SV Fort +24, Will +17; Str 37, Con 24; Climb +16, Jump +16, Swim +22. His rage lasts for 10 rounds, after which he is fatigued.

Scent (Ex): Maximus can detect approaching enemies, sniff out hidden foes, and track by sense of smell.

Possessions: Amulet of freedom of speech, bag of holding,* heavily fortified *+1 breastplate, hand of the mage.*

* New item; see next column.

Maximus's Background

Krikk awakened Maximus several years ago. Since then, the two have become close and loyal friends, sharing each other's strengths. These days, Krikk prefers to remain in her cave as much as possible to work on her golem project. Meanwhile, Maximus patrols the mountain range and goes into the villages at the base of the range to collect protection money and magic components for his mistress.

Maximus began as a barbarian but developed a taste for a more formal fighting style and greater overall discipline. He hired a human, Angrist Gildor, to teach him new fighting styles and how to properly lead others. Since then, Maximus has become an accomplished fighter and leader, often recruiting mercenaries on Krikk's behalf and leading them on dangerous missions to crush barbarians or assert the dragon's authority over a village.

Maximus prefers using his paws in battle, but he isn't shy about using magic to get everything else done. He has a magic item to allow him to communicate with humanoids, as well as a *hand of the mage* as a substitute for opposable thumbs.

By accomplishing so many dangerous missions and staying more active than Krikk over the past few years, Maximus has exceeded the dragon in character levels. But he still considers Krikk his leader and will remain her loyal soldier to the end.

The dire bear is accompanied by human fighters he has recruited. Determine the number of fighters with him (and their level) to provide the desired encounter level. Page 53 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* lists statistics for the NPC fighters Maximus has with him.

NEW MAGIC

The NPCs use the following item and spell in this adventure, but they can become available to your PCs as well.

Item: Amulet of Freedom of Speech

This amulet allows the wearer to verbally communicate despite lacking the physical ability to do so. For example, an awakened animal or plant that could not normally form words can do so while wearing this item. Note that the amulet does not impart any language ability—the wearer must have something to say.

Caster Level: 7th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item; *Market Price:* 5,000.

Spell: Ice Dragon

Transmutation
Level: Dru 5
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Effect: One Medium-sized animated dragon made of ice per 5 levels of the caster
Duration: 1 hour/level
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

This spell creates one or more Medium-sized mindless animated servants made of ice and shaped in the form of a dragon. The ice dragon does not have any of the special abilities of a dragon, it's merely animated ice that has taken the form of a winged dragon for aesthetic purposes.

The ice dragon obeys the commands of the caster and can fight on its behalf. Use the statistics for a Medium-sized construct in the *Monster Manual*, page 17. When not fighting, it behaves as does an unseen servant, performing one task at a time (repeatedly unless instructed otherwise). The ice forming the dragon is magically prevented from melting for the spell's duration.

The caster can influence the ice dragon to a range of 100 feet. If the ice dragon strays beyond that range, it freezes in place, looking exactly like a beautiful, very detailed ice sculpture of a dragon, frozen in whatever pose it held when it went out of range. If the temperature around the ice dragon is freezing or colder, the construct will remain intact even after the spell expires—but only as ice, not as an animated servant. That ice sculpture could be reanimated as an ice dragon in the future, if the spell is cast again.

The material component for the spell is one 5-foot cube of ice per dragon. Ice created magically is not sufficient—the ice must be formed with naturally-occurring water such as from a stream, spring, rain, or melting snow. The spell is, generally speaking, effective only in arctic environments that have large enough natural ice blocks to make ice dragons.

Krikk created this spell as part of a ritual to create ice golems.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Eric Haddock is the publisher of Abashima Press <www.abashima.com>. He heads into the mountains only for the hiking and tries to avoid walking ice sculptures and intelligent dire bears.